Introductions

• Sarah Collentine, Associate Director of Early Childhood

• Kelsey Nelson, Kindergarten Teacher
Session Agenda

• Overview of Christopher House

• Context of collaboration

• Alignment to State of Illinois Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee Report/Recommendations

• Internal collaboration timelines
  – Shared Activities
  – Shared Trainings
  – Shared Reflections

• Program Reflection and Transition Protocols
1906
Founded by Presbyterian Church of Evanston

1965
First Head Start Provider in Chicago

1990's
Uptown Site Opens

2002
Lori Baas, CEO

2007
Logan Square Site Opens

2008
Chicago Benchmarking Collaborative Launched

2013
Elementary School & Family Resource Center Opens in Belmont Cragin

2015
First million dollar gift—naming the James & Jean Stewart Campus

2016
Still growing...

Helping Families Thrive.
Christopher House is a family of schools working to close the opportunity gap for low-income children and their families from birth through high school.

Christopher House Infant & Preschool
Prepares children, ages 6 weeks to 5 years old, for school, stimulates cognitive growth and develops emotional intelligence.

Christopher House Elementary School
Builds educational continuity from preschool through elementary school and empowers achievement and perseverance in all students.

Christopher House After School
Drives students to develop healthy behaviors, explore new opportunities, achieve academic excellence, and succeed in post-secondary education. For K-5 students we offer After School and for grades 6-12 we offer Youth Leadership.

Christopher House Parent School
Offers education and support to help parents provide a safe, self-sufficient and nurturing home environment conducive to educational success.
Context of Collaboration

- Schools opened in 2013
- Team building/creation of shared Kinder Readiness Matrix
- Preschool and Kindergarten teacher meetings
- Trainings, conferences and International study tour on Reggio-Inspired approach

Requires:
- Intentionality
- Prioritization by Leadership across schools
- Organization, planned collaboration with specific outcomes
Alignment to State of Illinois Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee Report/Recommendations

• Data
  • Preschool teachers transmit data and critical information about individual students for kindergarten teachers to utilize during the beginning of the year
  • Based on the KIDS data, kindergarten teachers provide parents with resources to support those critical domains in the home

• Classroom Practices
  • Preschool and kindergarten teachers create individualized goals for students with parents and families based on standards (CCSS or TSG)
  • Kindergarten teachers work with preschool teachers to develop a structure that is focused on social/emotional and play-based development as they transition into the kindergarten setting
Alignment to State of Illinois Kindergarten Transition Advisory Committee Report/Recommendations

• Engagement
  • Preschool and kindergarten teachers welcome students and parents into kindergarten spaces prior to the start of school
  • Preschool and kindergarten teachers work harder each year to increase collaboration time (joint unit plans/projects, trainings, etc.)

• Professional Development
  • Preschool and kindergarten teachers find a joint PD to attend (2018-19: Reggio practices)
  • Future plans: teachers are working together to develop math plans that incorporate more play-based, critical thinking skills into the mathematics curriculum
Timeline: August

• **Pre-service**
  - New teachers get to know expectations
  - Explore curriculum: TSG, Common Core SS, KIDS
  - Team building: teachers get to know each other
  - Attend training together: trauma informed practices, whole-child development
  - Reggio-inspired practices: how preschool is using these techniques and how kindergarten can continue those practices in their rooms
  - Future: what can we collaborate on?
  - Teachers give feedback about what types of PD the teachers would like

• **STEP**
  - Kindergarten teachers complete STEP assessment to determine individualized instruction
  - Kindergarten teachers compare STEP data from previous preschool classroom
  - This data is also used to provide feedback to preschool teachers on areas of need
    • Preschool teachers at Christopher House can focus on areas of need based on STEP data
    • Teachers can then incorporate more literacy skills into various parts of the day (drop off, morning meeting, small groups, etc.)
Fall observation
- Preschool teachers visit kindergarten classrooms to learn about beginning of year expectations
  - Academic
  - Behavioral
  - Independent functioning
- After the visit, teachers can discuss ways to support exiting preschoolers based on the feedback from the teachers and visit
- Christopher House preschool students transition to the elementary school, making this feedback individualized and immediate

STEP Training
- Kindergarten teacher gives STEP training to preschool teachers
- Preschool teachers will use this tool to determine areas of need based on each individualized student
- Using an assessment such as STEP is a great way for both preschool and kindergarten teachers to gain reliable data on specific skills

Timeline: November
**Morning Meeting**
- Preschool and kindergarten teachers meet to discuss ways to incorporate literacy and mathematics skills into morning meeting
- These skills are directly related to KIDS domains, Common Core State Standards, and Teaching Strategies GOLD standards, making it relevant to ECE and kindergarten
- Trainings like this can be developed based on school and classroom need
  - Find a time of day that preschool and kindergarten share (e.g. morning meeting, calendar/math, writing workshops, etc.)

**Peer Observations**
- Teachers from both preschool and kindergarten visit classrooms to find ways to support their students
  - Kindergarten teachers learn more play-based, Reggio strategies to learn in the classroom
  - Preschool teachers get a glimpse at kindergarten expectations; behavior, independent functioning, and academics
  - Teachers learn explicit ways to teach specific standards

**KIDS**
- What we'd like to do: kinder and preschool get together to review data

**Timeline: November**
Timeline: March-April

- **Preschool STEP done**
  - Allows teachers extra few months to review data and create individualized plans for students heading to kindergarten
  - Gives time for preschool and kindergarten teachers to meet and discuss strategies to support students who are struggling in specific areas

- **Peer Observation**
  - Same format as beginning of the year
Timeline: May

• **Preschool Student Observations**
  - Kindergarten teachers get to visit preschool classrooms to observe incoming students
  - These observations will work along with the case study forms when teachers make decisions on placement

• **Diverse Learner Meetings**
  - Kindergarten teachers and case manager meet with families and teachers of any diverse Learners heading to kindergarten
  - Kindergarten teachers get a glimpse at IEP, which helps teachers plan and individualize room for the beginning of the year
Timeline: June

• **Case Study Forms**
  - Contents:
    - Teaching Strategies GOLD scores
    - Background of child and/or family
    - Individualized Education Program (transition plan)
  - Teachers meet informally to discuss these forms and ask/answer questions
  - Family Support Services are also present to answer questions about the family

• **Informal Meet the Teacher**
  - Kindergarten teachers hold a Meet the Teacher for incoming parents
  - Parents are given a "one-pager" that outlines what students

• **Over the Summer**
  - Preschool teachers support children learning about what kindergarten will be like, how it will be different (ie eating in the cafeteria, coming in new entrance without parent, etc)
  - Social stories are created for specific students based on need
Christopher House Practices

• Data
  - Kindergarten readiness Matrix
  - KIDS alignment to TSG
  - STEP assessment
  - Diverse Learner supports

• Classroom Practices
  - Reggio Inspired principles
  - Play-based component and open-ended materials
  - Morning meeting
Christopher House Practices

• Engagement
  - parent communication
  - family advocates/social workers
  - Parent policy council/parent advisory council

• Professional Development
  - joint PD several times each year, present at ECYD in-service
Reflecting on current practices

- What are ways that your program/school is already aligning with the recommendations in the Kindergarten Advisory report?
  - Consider the 4 domains;
    - Data
    - Classroom Practices
    - Engagement
    - Professional Development

- Where is there room for growth/improvements?

- Discuss at your table/with those sitting near you
Any Questions?

scollentine@christopherhouse.org

knelson@christopherhouse.org